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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN BURUNDI

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1049 (1996) of 5 March 1996, in which I was requested to keep the Council closely informed on the situation in Burundi, including on my efforts to facilitate a comprehensive political dialogue, and to submit a full report on the implementation of the resolution by 1 May 1996. Some days before that date the Security Council was informed that the report would be delayed by a few days because two significant developments were in progress or imminent - the meeting of Mr. Julius R. Nyerere at Mwanza, United Republic of Tanzania, and an address to the nation that was to be delivered by the President of the Republic of Burundi on 25 April. I was also awaiting the outcome of a mission to Burundi by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs from 24 to 26 April and a meeting I was to have with my Special Representative at Nairobi on 30 April.

2. In resolution 1049 (1996), the Council also asked me, in consultation, as appropriate, with the Government of Burundi, the heads of State of the Great Lakes region, Member States concerned, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the European Union, to intensify preparations for convening a regional conference for peace and security and development in the Great Lakes region to address the issue of political and economic stability in the Great Lakes States. The Council also encouraged me to continue my consultations with Member States concerned and OAU, as appropriate, on contingency planning both for the steps that might be taken to support a comprehensive dialogue and for a rapid humanitarian response in the event of widespread violence or a serious deterioration of the situation in Burundi.

3. Furthermore, I was requested by the Council, in consultation with interested States and organizations, to report to the Council on the possibility of establishing a United Nations radio station in Burundi, including through voluntary contributions, to promote reconciliation and dialogue and to relay constructive information as well as supporting the activities undertaken by United Nations agencies, particularly in the fields of refugees and returnees.

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4. Since resolution 1049 (1996) was adopted, the Security Council has received regular oral briefings by my Personal Representative. On 12 April, I addressed a letter to the President of the Council, in accordance with paragraph 15 of resolution 1049 (1996), informing him of the deterioration of the situation that had taken place during the month of March (S/1996/313).

II. POLITICAL SITUATION

5. The security situation has continued to deteriorate and tension remains high as Hutu armed bands, led by Mr. Leonard Nyangoma, President of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD), are intensifying their attacks throughout the country. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that since February 1996 over 100,000 people have been displaced as a result of the fighting. The strategy of the armed bands seems to be to put pressure on the Army and to stretch its capacity by carrying out "hit and run" guerrilla attacks simultaneously in different rural areas. They attack military personnel and perpetrate acts of revenge against their families and their properties. Their victims also include Hutus. By burning crops and slaughtering cattle, a symbol of wealth, they force civilians to leave their hills, which puts additional pressure on Burundi's subsistence economy. Most recently, the rebels seem to be trying to isolate the capital by laying mines on the routes linking it to the rest of the country. The Burundian Army has responded vigorously to these attacks, sometimes through pre-emptive actions and sometimes through reprisals against civilians in areas where attacks have taken place. Civilian casualties caused by both sides are reported to be high and my Special Representative receives many letters from local leaders on this issue. There have in recent days been new flows of Burundian refugees into Zaire.

6. In these circumstances, it is clearly desirable that negotiations should be initiated for a restoration of peace in Burundi. Mr. Nyangoma's position in this regard is that certain conditions must be met before such negotiations can take place. Those conditions, as indicated in a communiqué issued by CNDD on 24 March 1996, include: the immediate release of 5,000 members of the Front pour la democracie au Burundi (FRODEBU) who are held as political prisoners; the return to barracks of the Government's troops; and the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the INTERPOL arrest warrants against Mr. Nyangoma and the Vice-President of CNDD, Mr. Christian Sendegeya. Once those conditions were fulfilled, CNDD would ask its armed wing to abide by a cease-fire. During that cease-fire, CNDD would agree to participate in negotiations leading to the abolition of the convention on governance (S/1995/190, annex); the rehabilitation of the institutions cancelled by that convention; the integration of the armed wing of CNDD into the government army after the latter had removed "its putschists and its criminals"; the creation of conditions for the return of refugees and displaced persons who have lived in camps, some of them for decades and others since the coup d'état of 21 October 1993; and the arrest of the "putschists", the assassins of President Ndadaye and all those who "committed crimes against humanity" before, during and after the coup d'état.

7. The President of the Republic has expressed his readiness to talk with Mr. Nyangoma on the condition that his armed bands renounce violence. The Prime

Minister, however, still refuses to meet with Mr. Nyangoma, whom he accuses of planning a genocide against the Tutsi population.

8. The latest upsurge of violence came just before the leaders of the 12 political parties which signed the convention on governance, together with the Parti pour le redressement national (PARENA) of former President Bagaza (which did not sign the convention) and a recently established party, l'Alliance des Vaillants, accepted the invitation of Mr. Nyerere, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to meet with him at Mwanza, United Republic of Tanzania, on 20 and 21 April 1996. CNDD was not invited. Those consultations were followed by a substantive meeting restricted to President Nyerere, the leaders of the two main parties (FRODEBU and the Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA)) and representatives of the President of the Republic and of the Prime Minister, which took place at Mwanza from 22 to 26 April.

9. On 26 April, the talks chaired by President Nyerere ended inconclusively. He had wanted to obtain from FRODEBU and UPRONA: (a) a commitment to condemn and renounce violence as a means of achieving or retaining political power; and (b) a commitment to the use of constitutional means for the achievement of political objectives. UPRONA's major objective was for the Mwanza meeting to condemn the perpetrators of violence and to agree on the dismantling of the capacity of such groups. FRODEBU, on the other hand, wanted the meeting to discuss the root causes of the violence in Burundi and to reach an agreement on a lasting solution to the conflict. The draft of a joint statement had been prepared by President Nyerere. The parties agreed to that part of it which condemned the violence and sought the support of the international community in ending the crisis. They could not, however, agree on some of the other issues in the draft and were therefore unable to sign the proposed statement. It was agreed that they and President Nyerere would meet again at Mwanza on 22 May. My Special Representative, Mr. Marc Faguy, the Special Envoy of the European Union, Mr. Aldo Ajello, and the Representative of OAU in Burundi, Mr. Léandre Bassolé, have been invited to attend.

10. On 16 April, the Government initiated internal discussions to prepare the national debate provided for in the convention on governance. The report of a preparatory technical commission, which had been made public on 30 December 1995 and which examined the modalities for convening the debate, was distributed amongst members of the Government. Many in Burundi believe that the debate is an appropriate mechanism for a wide-ranging political dialogue in which all tendencies could be represented. Others, however, consider that a public debate of this kind would be difficult to conduct in the security conditions which currently prevail in the country.

11. OAU has, meanwhile, extended by three months, until 13 July 1996, the mandate for its observer mission, notwithstanding the difficulties of OAU in financing this operation and the restrictions placed on its freedom of movement by the Burundian authorities.

12. On 25 April, the President of the Republic made an address to the nation, on which he had previously consulted the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and other political leaders. In his message, he condemned the massacres of the civilian populations by CNDD, the Parti pour la libération du

peuple hutu (PALIPEHUTU) and the Front de la libération nationale (FROLINA). He asked the United Nations to intensify the work of the Commission of Inquiry so that the truth could be rapidly established and relevant measures be taken. He announced that he had taken the initiative to create an independent national commission for human rights and enumerated other measures which he had taken to reform the State. On the military side, the army would be reinforced, reorganized and modernized; a national police would be trained and equipped so that it could be deployed in all the communes; a gendarmerie would be created to act in situations that exceeded the capacity of the national police; and the army would monitor the integrity of the borders and ensure the nation's sovereignty and independence, but would not undertake police functions. The territorial administration would be re-energized, reinforced and strengthened. The judicial system would be also reinforced.

13. The President urged the international community to prevent the infiltration of armed groups from neighbouring countries, to identify the flow of armaments which threatened the security and peace of the Great Lakes region, and to silence the incendiary messages broadcast by "Radio-Démocratie" (which is under the control of Mr. Nyangoma). While convinced that the Burundian conflict could be resolved only by the military, diplomatic and political efforts of the Burundians themselves, the President underlined the importance of the assistance that could be provided by the international community and in particular by Burundi's neighbours. He took the opportunity to encourage former President Nyerere to continue his efforts and assured him of his full support. He called for the establishment of a regional pact of non-aggression and collective security and of a regional monitoring centre on human rights and the prevention of genocide. He underlined the urgent need for a regional conference that would help stop the illegal flow of arms in the subregion.

14. In conclusion, the President reaffirmed that deep reform of the State was needed. The national debate, which would soon take place, would be the appropriate forum to discuss those reforms.

15. Despite the President's appeal for political dialogue violence has continued unabated. Attacks against FRODEBU members of the National Assembly are continuing. Following the murder on 20 April of a member from Cibitoke, another member narrowly survived an assassination attempt at Bujumbura on 26 April and a third, also from Cibitoke, was assassinated on 2 May. Meanwhile, UPRONA has resumed its attacks against the President of the Republic and made public its plan of action to resolve the crisis. This includes: use of the Mwanza meetings to obtain the condemnation and dismantling of the "integrist, genocidal militia which has put Burundi into mourning"; the putting in place of a system of civilian self-defence; the purging of the territorial and local administration; the militarization of the provinces that are in difficulty; and suspension of the academic year for three months in order to provide students with defence training.

III. CONSULTATIONS WITH MEMBER STATES AND THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

16. Pursuant to paragraph 13 of Security Council resolution 1049 (1996), I have continued my consultations with interested Member States and with OAU on contingency planning in relation to the situation in Burundi.

17. As far as political dialogue is concerned, all the Member States consulted expressed their support for the efforts of President Nyerere. They noted the need for a coordinated political effort and the undesirability of uncoordinated unilateral initiatives. It was also recognized that it was important that the United Nations should continue to cooperate with OAU and with the European Union, which had appointed Mr. Aldo Ajello as its Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region.

18. Regarding a possible regional conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region, the Member States consulted believed that the idea of a conference should be retained. My own view remains that all interested countries would have to agree to participate in the conference before concrete preparations for its convening could start. As has previously been established, two countries of the region remain reluctant to participate.

19. As regards broadcasts of "Radio Démocratie", the Member States consulted thought it important to silence them, though several said that they were not comparable with the Rwandan "Radio Mille Collines".

20. All of the Member States consulted indicated that they shared my concern about the situation in Burundi and agreed that the events in Rwanda of two years ago should not be allowed to recur. There was a consensus in favour of resolving the situation through peaceful means and political dialogue and, in particular, through the efforts of President Nyerere. Nevertheless, Member States expressed broad support for the idea that contingency planning should be undertaken for a humanitarian intervention in the event of a worst-case scenario, as outlined in my report of 15 February 1996 (S/1996/116). This aspect of the consultations is described in greater detail in section VIII below.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

21. Since my last report, humanitarian activities in Burundi have continued to be adversely affected by an alarming rise in insecurity throughout the country. Recent attacks on an unprecedented scale by armed rebels, coupled with reprisals by government forces, have resulted in an increased case-load of displaced persons and refugees requiring relief both inside Burundi and in neighbouring countries. Serious economic dislocation now threatens the already fragile food security situation. This has seriously curtailed the operations of humanitarian relief agencies, forcing the temporary suspension of relief operations in some parts of the country.

22. According to assessments from the field, displaced persons now number more than 300,000 (such estimates are exceedingly difficult to make when there is

lack of access to reliable sources of information and the figure given here is a conservative guess). In the week preceding the date of the present report, some 140,000 persons from Karuzi and Gitega provinces were forced from their homes because of heavy fighting in those areas. The number of Burundian refugees in eastern Zaire now exceeds 140,000. On 1 May, another 2,000 persons from Cibitoke province fled into Zaire after clashes erupted in the area. The United Republic of Tanzania is also host to an increasing number of refugees from Burundi; approximately 10,000 have moved into the country in 1996 and it is estimated that refugees are crossing the border at the rate of 100 per day. In addition to the Burundians leaving the country, as at 19 April 1996 a total of 90,606 Rwandan refugees were registered as requiring humanitarian assistance in Burundi.

23. This spate of violence has included grenade attacks and threats by extremists against several humanitarian agencies. Most humanitarian operations were suspended throughout the country from late December 1995 to January 1996. On 19 April, following a series of politically-inspired assassinations, all relief personnel were evacuated from the country's second largest city, Gitega. Throughout the interior, staff of relief agencies are advised to exercise extreme caution and to undertake only the most essential travel. In late April, the main highways to the north and south of Bujumbura were cut by ambushes and mines, isolating the capital from the rest of the country. The rising insecurity also extends to the capital, where the incidence of armed robberies and other violent crime against foreign personnel has also increased. At least 10 attacks against expatriates were reported during the week preceding the date of the present report.

24. The office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi provides a focal point for the emergency activities of United Nations agencies and, despite the deteriorating situation, has taken several initiatives in the dissemination of information, the promotion of inter-agency initiatives and the coordination of reintegration programmes for the victims of the conflict.

25. The current situation notwithstanding, United Nations agencies, together with non-governmental organizations and other humanitarian partners, are striving to provide food, essential medicines and non-food items to the internally displaced Burundians and to the refugee populations in neighbouring countries. Contingency planning has included the stockpiling of essential supplies to cope with any further deterioration in the situation. Measures have also been set in train to enhance United Nations communications and security arrangements and to implement an inter-agency contingency plan to protect the operations of the United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners.

26. One serious impediment to these efforts has been a continuing decline in the availability of resources for humanitarian programmes. This threatens the capacity of United Nations agencies to respond to Burundi's growing needs. The urgent requirements of the United Nations system are outlined in the United Nations consolidated fund-raising document for the Great Lakes region (1 January-31 December 1996), which was launched in February 1996. Air operations by the World Food Programme (WFP), essential in the current circumstances, are in jeopardy because of a lack of funding for the internal flight services used by the United Nations system throughout the country.

27. The intensified violence in March and April has dramatically increased the requirements for relief of displaced persons and refugees in and around Burundi. To address these needs, more support from the international community is urgently required. At this point, however, only a combination of additional resources and a radical improvement in the security situation will permit United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners to reach the people in need and deliver the humanitarian assistance required. The humanitarian organizations are extremely worried by recent trends and fear that, in the absence of stronger commitments both to provide funding and to work for improved security, human suffering is likely to escalate to unprecedented levels in Burundi.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS

28. The first four observers deployed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as part of the human rights fields operation in Burundi arrived at Bujumbura during the last two weeks of April. As a first step, they will develop a programme of activities which will constitute the basis for decisions regarding the deployment of additional observers. Governmental authorities have guaranteed their safety and promised full cooperation with the human rights mission.

VI. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

29. On 1 April 1996, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approved an $8 million project to assist Burundi in coping with the continuing civil strife and facilitating the transition to reconstruction and development. The project will target rehabilitation and humanitarian needs in the agricultural and health sectors, and provide support to community-based initiatives for reconstruction. Governance-related initiatives such as the promotion of dialogue and national reconciliation and education for peace and tolerance constitute an essential part of this specially tailored project. The expansion of UNDP assistance at this critical juncture is expected to contribute to both curative and preventive development by strengthening the moderate forces that seek stability and peace. The approval of the project is especially significant as a show of support at a time when international aid for Burundi is jeopardized by the protracted instability.

30. As for the World Bank, its project for Burundi cannot be implemented as quickly as possible because of the difficult security situation and limited knowledge within the country about how to implement a social fund. Sub-projects can nevertheless still be implemented. Seventeen have been completed since the Bank's last supervision mission in October 1995 and the Bank expects that between 40 and 50 of them can be implemented in 1996. The project team has begun working closely with non-governmental organizations and has lately signed 10 new agreements with them for specific sub-projects. The necessary steps will be taken to revise the manual of procedures and intensify efforts to sign agreements with the remaining non-governmental organizations to assist in sub-project implementation.

VII. A POSSIBLE UNITED NATIONS RADIO STATION IN BURUNDI

31. In accordance with paragraph 6 of resolution 1049 (1996), a technical mission of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations visited Burundi from 15 to 21 April to explore the possibility of establishing a United Nations radio station there. The mission had consultations, in cooperation with my Special Representative, with a wide spectrum of representatives of the Government, Radio/TV Burundi, the main political parties, other relevant groups of civil society and national and international non-governmental organizations. Meetings were also held with the OAU representative, members of the diplomatic community and United Nations agencies.

32. While recognizing the validity of the objectives specified in paragraph 6 of resolution 1049 (1996), the mission concluded that establishment of a United Nations radio station in Burundi was not a viable option at the present time nor would it be for the foreseeable future. On a purely technical level, installation of the necessary equipment was possible. The potential benefits of such an endeavour had, however, to be weighed against the risks. The technical feasibility of such a highly visible United Nations project could not be divorced from the current volatile situation in Burundi, which militated against undertaking it at this time.

33. The mission reported that radio programme content is where technical possibility confronts political reality. A United Nations radio station in Burundi on the scale required would involve language constraints and risks beyond the control of the Organization that would significantly reduce its chances of success. The United Nations, given its unique position, would not have even the limited margin for error or misperception enjoyed, to some extent, by non-governmental or other organizations currently involved in broadcasting there. Even a relatively minor error or distortion in a Kirundi-language broadcast by a United Nations station could appear to compromise the Organization's impartiality and reduce its scope for preventive action.

34. The necessity to broadcast in Kirundi was the critical factor. Some 90 per cent of the population speak Kirundi, while only 10 per cent are fluent in French. Accuracy and strict editorial control of Kirundi-language programmes would be essential. The pool of experienced Kirundi-speaking broadcasting personnel is limited, and the few independent radio production and broadcast operations already in existence face difficulties in achieving the desired level of programming in Kirundi. The need to recruit and/or train Kirundi-speaking staff would add significantly to the lead-time for a United Nations radio station to become fully operational. A United Nations radio operation could, at the same time, add to the pressure on local initiatives by further increasing competition for the most talented personnel.

35. The mission advised that the international community should avoid the temptation to view radio broadcasting by the United Nations or anyone else as a "quick fix" that could radically transform the political climate in Burundi. The power of radio to do harm in the region had been amply demonstrated but the extent to which it could change attitudes and sow peace was less clear.

36. On the procedural side, government officials, including the Minister for Communication and the Minister for External Relations and Cooperation, expressed support, in principle, for a United Nations radio station. The United Nations would none the less be subject to the existing national regulations and procedures for securing a broadcasting licence and frequencies. The difficulties encountered in recent United Nations efforts to obtain the requisite permission and facilities from national authorities, notably in Angola, Croatia and Rwanda, were indicative of what could be expected in Burundi.

37. All the diplomatic representatives consulted by the mission took the view, on political and practical grounds, that it would be better for the United Nations to work with existing radio production and broadcasting operations in Burundi, rather than establish its own station. They were pessimistic about the prospects for donor funding of a United Nations radio station in the face of other priorities.

38. The mission concluded that rather than establishing an independent United Nations radio station, alternative measures might be taken to address the concerns expressed in paragraph 6 of resolution 1049 (1996). The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General might be strengthened through the addition of one or two specialists in public information, who would be responsible for developing co-productions with existing radio operations serving Burundi and for liaison with public information personnel of United Nations and other agencies, as appropriate. Development of radio programming consistent with the objectives set out in resolution 1049 (1996) would be the immediate focus of such efforts. Extrabudgetary sources of funding would be required but in a considerably lesser quantity than for a new United Nations station.

39. Burundi-based radio operations could be the United Nations implementing partners for producing and distributing radio reports and features on United Nations themes, activities and issues, under the guidance of United Nations staff. In this regard, maximum support would be given to partnership with those initiatives which aim specifically at responding to the desire of the Burundian people for impartial and more diversified media, and for higher professional and ethical standards and practices.

40. The mission further recommended that Member States should be encouraged to support intensive and sustained efforts to develop a broad-based and independent media in Burundi as an essential complement to diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights and development efforts already under way. While such an approach was unlikely to produce dramatic results in the near term, an emphasis on short-term measures to the exclusion of such capacity-building would be only a palliative.

41. Should the Security Council nevertheless call for the establishment of a United Nations radio station in Burundi, the following technical factors would need to be taken into account. Some 90 per cent of the area targeted could be covered by five FM transmitters placed in Bujumbura and at sites around the country. The best coverage would be achieved by co-locating United Nations transmitters with existing Radio/TV Burundi transmitters in the interior. Agreements governing the use of the sites and services to be provided, including

power supply and security, would have to be negotiated with the relevant national authorities.

42. Initial equipment costs are estimated at approximately $300,000 including transmitters, signal processing equipment and the outfitting of a broadcast studio and a production suite. The operating budget, including staffing, communications, transport, rental of premises and administrative support, could be estimated only when the level of programming had been determined. A United Nations radio station would have to equal or surpass broadcast schedules of other local independent radio stations and sustain this level in order to build a dedicated audience. It is worth noting that Radio UNTAC was considered most effective when it achieved 15 hours of broadcasting daily. A proposal recently developed by the Secretariat for a possible successor to Radio UNAMIR estimated that a minimum of 4 international and some 30 local staff would be needed at an annual cost of some $2 million. A United Nations radio station in Burundi would require at least a similar level of staffing.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS

43. There has been a marked deterioration in the security situation in Burundi since early March. The United Nations has limited capacity to observe what is happening on the ground and the military observer mission of OAU is handicapped by government restrictions on its freedom of movement. But persistent reports indicate a downward spiral of violence. Extremist Hutu rebels, apparently infiltrated from Zaire, undertake murderous hit-and-run attacks against government targets and against Tutsi and moderate Hutu civilians. The armed forces, frustrated by the difficulty of preventing these attacks against their own people, sometimes exact reprisals against Hutu civilians in the areas where attacks have taken place, thus reinforcing the propaganda of those who control the extremists.

44. This vicious circle can be broken only if the moderates on both sides work together to create a genuine and effective coalition Government, with a common vision of their country's future and of how to cure its current ills. This is the objective that President Nyerere is trying to achieve, with the full support of the United Nations, OAU and the European Union. On my instructions, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, during his brief visit to Burundi, emphasized to all his interlocutors my support for President Nyerere, my conviction that there could be no military solution and that a political settlement had to be sought through negotiation, and the need for urgent action if the country was not to be overwhelmed by uncontrolled violence. I reaffirmed these points in personal letters which I sent to President Ntibantunganya and Prime Minister Nduwayo by hand of my Special Representative after my meeting with him in Nairobi on 30 April.

45. Meanwhile, I endorse the conclusions of the technical mission on the establishment of a United Nations radio station in Burundi, which have been summarized in the previous section of the present report, and I have instructed that a plan be prepared urgently on the basis of the alternative proposal recommended by the mission.

46. In these disturbing circumstances, I remain convinced of the necessity for the international community to proceed with contingency planning for a possible military intervention to save lives if disaster should strike Burundi and lead to large-scale killing of civilians. The Under-Secretary-General took advantage of his presence in Burundi to clarify my ideas, which had been widely misunderstood and perhaps misrepresented there. He emphasized that I did not have in mind a military intervention with any political purpose; the objective would be exclusively the humanitarian one of saving civilian lives. The difficulties of such an operation were obvious; but if the worst happened, Member States might find that they had no alternative but to deploy a multinational force authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations; it was therefore sensible for them to do some preliminary planning. Such planning did not, of course, preclude planning for a United Nations peace-keeping operation under Chapter VI if the Burundian parties should reach a political agreement and seek the United Nations help in implementing it. But the contingency I envisaged was a humanitarian disaster requiring an emergency deployment which would be beyond the capacity of the United Nations and would therefore require a multinational force.

47. The consultations which I have undertaken pursuant to paragraph 13 of resolution 1049 (1996) have been wide-ranging and intensive. I have approached, amongst others, the permanent members of the Security Council, major troop-contributing countries and interested States from both the region and other parts of the world.

48. These consultations have revealed that the sense of urgency that the situation in Burundi has aroused in me is widely shared. A significant level of agreement as to the seriousness of the situation and the need for action, including perhaps rapid action, to prevent further deterioration has also been evident. One measure that the Secretariat has been urged to take, and which is within its capacity, is to draw up plans for a possible peace-keeping operation under Chapter VI of the Charter to be deployed in the event of a political agreement reached by the parties. Preparations for the planning of such an operation are already under way though, regrettably, the political conditions that would permit its implementation are not at this point in sight.

49. Member States have agreed that contingency planning for other eventualities, including a worst-case scenario, should also proceed. A number of countries have expressed a readiness in principle to consider providing troops in the circumstances envisaged. But they have also made it clear that they would not do so unless certain conditions were fulfilled, including: broad-based participation in a truly multinational force, which should not be confined to units from a single region; leadership, both in the planning and in the conduct of the operation, by one or more Member States which have the necessary capacity for, and experience of, rapid deployment in such circumstances; and assistance in the fields of finance, equipment and logistic support.

50. Other Member States have expressed a readiness in principle to consider providing such assistance but none of them has yet volunteered to take the lead in planning, deploying and commanding the operation. In this context, the need

for further consultations to proceed in a discreet and confidential manner has been stressed.

51. It therefore seems necessary now to bring together the various Member States that have individually indicated to the Secretariat their possible interest in contributing to an operation of this kind in one way or another. In view of the urgency of the need in Burundi, I have decided to use my good offices to facilitate consultations of this kind among the Member States concerned, on the understanding that planning for a multinational force is beyond the capacity of the United Nations Secretariat and should, as in the past, be carried out by the Member State or States taking the lead in the operation.

52. Meanwhile, I seek the Security Council's support for this endeavour. It is essential for the international community to demonstrate to all parties in Burundi that it has the political will and the capacity to take timely and effective action to avert another tragedy in the Great Lakes region.